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Carl Schurz

Native Evangelist
of the
Pima Indians

Literary Department
of the
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Presbyterian Church
156 Fifth Avenue, New York

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THE happy Christmas season had just drawn to a close at our Indian Mission School in Tucson, Arizona, when word reached us that Carl, once a beloved and conscientious pupil at the school, afterward a faithful native pastor and helper among his people, the Pimas, lay dying. How our hearts ached for the little ones to be left behind, and for the sorrowing tribe for whom he had given his life!

Some twenty years ago, when the Rev. Charles Cook built the first of the five little mission churches now under his charge on the Pima Reservation, Carl's father heard and received gladly the Gospel message, and proved so earnest and steadfast that the office of elder was conferred upon him. His little lad, Carl (true Indian though bearing this German name), was early led to Christ, and was so promising a young Christian that Mr. Cook undertook to prepare him for the work of a

native helper. Carl's life story is a testimony of what God can do for a people sunk in the black mire of sin and superstition. The Pima Indians, though kind-hearted, generous and, for the most part, honest, are grossly immoral. Before the Gospel came to them they lived like animals, huddled together in little one-roomed mud or grass huts. From earliest childhood they consult only their own desires and pleasures; consequently, self-restraint and self-denial are almost unknown virtues among them. Great changes have, however, already been wrought among them through the efforts of our Tucson Mission boys and girls. Mr. Cook says that they are often efficient helpers to him in his work.

The Lord early showed Carl that He had chosen him for His messenger and that he was not henceforth to live for himself, but to be strong for others. For some time Carl worked with Mr. Cook in translating the Gospel of John into Pima, but his limited knowledge of English proved so great an obstacle to Bible study that, through Mr. Cook's advice, he entered the school at Tucson. He arrived one bright autumn day with his shy young wife and cunning little pappoose, and we made the acquaintance of one who was to be a continual help to both teachers and scholars during the three years of his stay among us. With the aid of some of our older boys, he built a small house on the school ranch, and earned his schooling and board by working half of each day, either on the ranch or school grounds. Carl's wife, though not as well educated as he, was a consistent Christian and made him a good helpmeet.

I have often wondered what we would have

done without Carl during those years, when the school was in its infancy, and few of the pupils were old enough or possessed of enough Christian principle to be relied upon. Loving hearts and helping hands always find many avenues for service, and Carl was seldom idle. Sometimes when the little boys were under his care they would take advantage of his good nature and torment him, trying his patience sorely, though they loved him; yet never, to my knowledge, did he speak an unchristian word or do an unchristian act while he was with us.

Carl tried always to influence the boys for the right, but he greatly disliked to report any misdemeanor. It is a well-known characteristic among Indians that they always stand by one another. He sought to prevent wrong-doing among the boys in a quiet way, but it was very hard for him to act as informer against them. The only time I knew the superintendent to be displeased with him was once, when he had knowledge of some scheme of mischief on foot and failed to make it known. Unlike most boys, Carl was unspoiled by holding positions of authority or responsibility. He wished to do his work faithfully, and was greatly troubled if anything went wrong when under his care. One of the most important of his duties was acting as interpreter for the new pupils. This he enjoyed, especially in the daily Bible lessons, or the Sunday services, and he always held the close attention of his dusky audience. In case of sickness he was invaluable, both as interpreter and nurse, for he was gentleness itself.

One case of his quick thoughtfulness stands out in my memory. A little fellow had a gathering in

his foot and Carl held him in his arms while the doctor examined it. Seeing that it needed lancing, the doctor reached for his knife, when, quick as thought, Carl's hand went over the boy's eyes, and the pain was over before the child had time to be frightened. The slowness of the Indian mind make such thoughtfulness very rare.

Sometimes sickness among us made it needful for Carl to act as substitute in the school, and one could not help pitying the poor fellow at such times, noting his weariness and his anxiety lest his duties should not be faithfully performed; but it was always found that what he had taught, the children knew perfectly. At such times the chief interest was in the opening exercises, when he carefully drilled his class in some Scripture lesson, and then made the meaning clear in their own language. It was not an unusual thing for the larger boys to have a prayer meeting among themselves, and there Carl was always found, frequently as the leader. He did very well in all his studies, yet never mastered the language sufficiently to make the Bible really an open book to him. After three years of study he returned to the Reservation, and receiving a commission from the Presbyterian Board, he became a native evangelist, on a salary of $250 a year.

As the Pimas have no written language, Carl's work was far from easy. He often said to me, pathetically, "The commentaries are so hard, I can't understand them, and so many words in the Bible, I don't know what they mean." Simple sermons, such as Mr. Moody's, he devoured eagerly, because as he said, "They are so plain and easy to understand." One would need to see his

patient, noble face, and to hear his quaint accent to feel the pathos of it all. That he studied and preached faithfully is shown by a sentence in one of his letters. "Some people think preaching is easy, but when I get through I am as tired as when I work with a hoe or shovel; but I am glad to tell my people about our dear Saviour, who can take away our sins.'

In spite of his public work he never lost his shyness, and always when he returned to Tucson for a visit met the teachers in the same simple, unaffected way that he always had. Neither did he seem to consider himself above the most ignorant. Sometimes, at our superintendent's request, he would talk to the boys and girls in the Indian language. Once he opened his Bible to a psalm and read it in Pima, to the great delight of the children, who scarcely stirred in their eagerness to catch every word.

There are now five little churches on the Pima Reservation, from 10 to 30 miles apart, and in these Mr. Cook, Carl Schurz or Edward Jackson (also a Tucson pupil) preached every Sunday. The congregations were largest in hot weather, because of the presence of the school children.

Besides the church services, prayer meetings and village meetings, Carl worked at farming to aid him in supporting his wife and four little ones. Last year his two little sons were in school at Tucson. His family life at home was an excellent object lesson to the Indians about him. Thanks were returned to God before each meal. Although sorrow visited his home, and the dear wife and mother was taken away, his trust in the God of all comfort did not waver.

Every Christmas a small box of gifts was made up at Tucson for Edward and Carl, and t[illegible] when a few books from the Moody Colportag[illegible] brary were added, their delight was dou[illegible] Last summer Carl's health began to fail, an[illegible] poor face looked so thin and worn that it made one's heart ache to see him. He needed rest and proper food, and Mr. Cook was anxious to send him to California for a time, but he could not afford it. We besought God earnestly that his life might be spared to his people, for the workers at Tucson knew the value of his influenece in the homes of our boys and girls. But the call had come for higher service, and although good medical treatment was administered he grew steadily worse. Early in January he was at rest.

Before he passed away Carl gave over his four children to his mother's care. But for his people —who shall care for and labor for them as he has done? "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

LAURA W. PIERSON.

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